

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

May 24, 1999

LR 18

I believed that you could, but one never knows, and the body was unwilling to take that chance with the petition process, which may have been a wise decision. But the point is, it's not the same as it used to be, regrettably. I think it would be best if the petition process had been left to volunteer circulators. In line with what Senator Chambers was discussing, I, too, think that basically it was not a grassroots effort last time that fought several of the ballot issues. It...it was groups in Nebraska, there were groups in Nebraska who actually came up with the money to tell the other side of the story. And I would suggest to you that, if we have enough of these ballot issues, that these groups are going to be strapped to continue coming up with the large amounts of money necessary to tell the other side of the story. We're talking about groups like Farm Bureau, League of Municipalities, Nebraska State Education Association, and on and on. There is a limit to what they can do in fighting some of these petition issues. I don't believe that any of us, here on this floor, think that somebody should be able to buy an issue, and that's what is so attractive about this particular proposal that Senator Kristensen has brought to us. It would mean that a great deal of discussion and thought would have to go into a petition process, and it would not necessarily lend itself to continuing large expenditures of money. It might even discourage some of those large expenditures of money. I didn't vote for the Beutler amendment, because I didn't want to extend that deadline backwards by another month. But I do believe, Senator Dierks, that the period now is about two years from election to election for gathering signatures. And I think what will happen is they will start a little bit earlier in that process, probably will need the same amount of time to gather signatures, but they will start a little bit earlier, particularly if they're the volunteer gathers.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: The final thing that I would like to leave with you this morning is, remember, this issue goes on the ballot. It will be up to the people to decide whether they think this is a good idea or not. And I would suggest to you that the people are a little bit tired of some of these petition drives when they're accosted on the street, they're not told what the petition is really about, and I think they would like